

MS.

V

Dr. G I B S O N's

S E R M O N,

At the CONSECRATION of

WILLIAM

Lord Bishop of CARLISLE.

⓪

2V O 3 1 A 30

30 1 A 30 1 A 30

30 1 A 30 1 A 30



M 1 A 30

30 1 A 30 1 A 30

A 22509
S E R M O N

Preach'd in *Lambeth-Chapel*,

A T T H E
C O N S E C R A T I O N

O F T H E

Right Rev^d Father in God,

W I L L I A M

Lord Bishop of *CARLISLE*,

On *Sunday*, *June* 14th, 1702.

By *EDMUND GIBSON*, D. D. *Bp*

Chaplain to the most Reverend Father in God *THOMAS*
Lord Arch-bishop of *Canterbury*.

L O N D O N :

Printed for *Awnsham* and *John Churchill*, at the *Black Swan*
in *Pater-Noster-Row*, 1702.

S E R M O N

Preach'd in Newbury Church

CONFESSION

By Rev. James M. G.

W E L L

And



1 Theff. v. 12, 13.

*We beseech you, Brethren, to know them
which Labour among you, and are over
you in the Lord, and Admonish you ;
And to Esteem them very highly in Love
for their Work's sake.*

IT has been doubted by some Interpreters, who otherwise bore no Ill will to the Episcopal Character, whether they whom the *Theffalonians* are commanded to *Know* and *Esteem*, were the Presbyters, or more immediately the Bishops, within the Bounds of that Metropolis. And it must be own'd, where there is only a general mention of the Ministers of Christ as exercising any Parts of the Function, common to the Inferior Orders with their Bishops, there is some Difficulty in distinguishing of which Order they were immediately meant. But the Expressions of my Text seem plainly enough to point out the *Bishops* of the Church, under such

Distinctions of *Power* and *Authority* as could not properly be apply'd to the Inferior Orders. The Christians in *Theſſalonica* have a general Precept to *know thoſe who were over them in the Lord*; and whom can the Apoſtle be ſo naturally ſuppos'd to mean, as the Perſons left and eſtabliſh'd in thoſe Parts, for the Government of the Church? Eſpecially, when the Phraſe in the Original *παραμένους ὑμῶν*, falls in ſo appoſitely with the known Style of the Biſhops, *Παραμένους*, apply'd peculiarly to that Order by the more early Writers of the Church. Add to this, that it is immediately follow'd by an Act appropriated to the Episcopical Order, *i. e.* an *Authoritative Admonition*; for ſo I call this, becauſe the Expreſſion here is the ſame with another Paſſage of St. Paul to *Titus*, Biſhop of *Crete*, where the Admonition is undoubtedly Authoritative, *A Man that is an Heretick, after the firſt and ſecond Admonition reject*: There the Phraſe is *μὲν δευτέραν Νόθεσίαν*, and here, *Νόθεσίαν ὑμῶν*.

I grant, if my Text were to be interpreted according to the preſent Conſtitution of National Churches, there would be ſome Reaſon to apply that Character of *Ruling over the Chriſtians*, if not immediately to the Presby-

those they had sent out to Labour in their Lord's Vineyard.

Under such a Government, was the Gospel propagated and maintain'd for some Ages, without any fix'd Bounds of Rule and Jurisdiction besides those of the Bishop ; which were then call'd *Παροικίαι*, as we find them Styl'd by some of our Own Writers as late as the Seventh Century.

For here, it was a long time before Parochial Divisions were Establish'd in the present Form ; every Diocese being Rul'd, and the Ecclesiastical Offices supply'd, by the immediate Care of the Bishops, in the Primitive manner we have already hinted. Not that the subsequent Settlement of Presbyters in Parochial Cures transferr'd to them any real Exemptions from their Spiritual Superiors : Such a fix'd Exercise of their Ministry gave them only a greater *Appearance* of Rule and Authority in the Church ; and by consequence made this and some other Texts of Scripture referring to the *Government* thereof, more liable to be mis-apply'd, than they could possibly be under a due Regard to the Constitution of the Times in which they were Written.

Thus much being premis'd, I may suppose my Text to contain an earnest Recommendation

tion of *Reverence* to the Character and *Obedience* to the Authority of those, who by the Providence of God are constituted Bishops and Governours of his Church. And I may the rather take this for granted, because 'tis no part of my design to enter into the Dispute about the difference between Bishops and Presbyters as to Order : This has been sufficiently establish'd upon other parts of Scripture, and the perpetual Practice of the Catholick Church ; and all I propose at this time, is to enforce upon *Us* (who are already perswaded of it) that *Esteem*, *Deference* and *Veneration*, which is suitable to their high Character, and our Perswasion that it is conferr'd upon them by the Authority of Jesus Christ.

To this End, the Text leads me to the Consideration of three Things.

I. What is here meant by *Knowing* our Spiritual Superiors ; *I beseech you, Brethren, to Know them which Labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you.*

II. That the immediate effect of a right *Knowledge* of their Character, Office, and Authority in the Church of Christ, is a high *Esteem* or *Veneration* from all Christians, And

to

to Esteem *them* very highly in Love, for their *Work's* sake.

III. That the Want of that Esteem and Veneration upon the Minds of Christians, disables our Superiors from answering the *Ends* of their Order, and in the consequence endangers the Order it self.

1. What is here meant by *Knowing* our Spiritual Superiors: *I beseech you, &c.* Εἰδέναι τοὺς κοπιῶντας, &c. i. e. to consider and regard them with relation to the Character under which they were sent, and the Authority they have to Rule and Preside over you as Governours of the Church. For so we find the Word us'd, *Acts* 23. 5. Οὐκ ᾔδειν, Ἀδελφοί, ὅτι ὁτιν ἄρχιερεὺς. *I wist not, Brethren, that he was the High Priest.* St. Paul knew, without doubt, that *Ananias* sat there as High Priest; but his meaning plainly was, that under the provocation of that unjust usage, he did not *consider* that he was standing before the High Priest, and that if he had consider'd it, and remember'd withal what *Deference* the Law prescribes to the Office and Character, he would not have given that Offence. To the same purpose is that other Expression of our Apostle *Rom.* 5. 16. *From henceforth know we no Man*

Man after the Flesh, *ὁὐδὲνα οἶδα μὴ κατὰ σὰρκα*, that is, we who are advancing the *Spiritual Kingdom of Christ*, have no regard to the carnal or secular Concerns of Men, nor esteem them the more on account of any worldly Advantages they enjoy.

Knowing therefore, in these and the like Places, is an abstracting from the *Persons* of Men, and considering them under any *Character* or *Qualification* which the Providence of God has bestow'd upon them. And so we *know* our Spiritual Governours in the Apostle's Sense, when we distinguish them from other Men, by the extraordinary *Mission* and *Authority* they have receiv'd from God ; as we *declare* and *profess* that Knowledge, when a steady and religious Regard to the Divine Mission, appears in our Words, and Actions, and all our Behaviour towards them.

To the end therefore we may have a right *Knowledge* of our Spiritual Superiors, we are to consider the Divine Character they bear, in a Two-fold Respect: *First*, As they are *Sent* by Christ, to be the Governours of his Church upon Earth ; and *Secondly*, As they receive from him an *Authority* sufficient to answer the *Ends* of their Mission.

1. The Bishops are to be consider'd as Commission'd by Christ to be the Governours of his Church upon Earth. For that it was our Saviour's great Design to Establish to himself a Church, under a visible Government of Ministers sent by him, to Act under *Him* their Head, by his Authority, and in his Place; appears from the whole Tenour of the Gospel, and all the Methods taken by himself and his Apostles to propagate and preserve it. While he continu'd upon Earth, he Govern'd his Church in his own Person; And he who had been sent by his Father, being about to return to Him, transferr'd that Authority to the Apostles; *As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he Breath'd on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whosoever Sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever Sins ye retain, they are retain'd.*

St. John
20. 22,
23.

The Apostles thus empower'd, continu'd for some time the sole Governours of the Church; which was then so narrow, that they were able to Administer the Government of the whole in their own Persons. But as the Number of the Faithful increas'd, and the Professors of Christianity became numerous in some of the Capital Cities, the Apostles

stles (who were call'd away to Plant the Gospel in other Places) Communicated that Authority to Others, to take upon them the Government of the Churches they had Establish'd, and were now under a necessity of leaving. Thus, St. *James* was settl'd at *Jerusalem*, *Timothy* at *Ephesus*, *Titus* in *Crete*, and *Epaphroditus* at *Philippi*; and these, as our Lord and his Apostles had done, Constituted Others to Act with the same Power and Authority; as the increase of Christianity and the occasions of the Church requir'd it: From whom a perpetual Succession (for some time under the name of *Apostles*, and afterwards of *Bishops*) hath been continu'd in the Church of Christ.

By this Doctrin (the same that *Antiquity*, and our own *Church* from thence, hath taught us) we *Know* our Spiritual Governours, when we consider them as Successors to the Apostles in the Government of the Church; that they are set over us by Christ for that End, and rule in his Stead, and Execute their Office by an Authority deriv'd from him *the great Shepherd and Bishop of Souls*. For,

2. They are to be consider'd as having receiv'd from Christ an Authority sufficient to answer the *Ends* of their Mission. This is suppos'd in all Government; which implies a

Power convey'd by the first Commission to do all Things immediately necessary for the Preservation of Peace and Order ; more especially, the Power of making Laws, and of punishing the Breach of them. And, as to the Church, we know that as Christ committed to the Bishops the Government thereof, so in the purest Ages the Authority of making Laws of Order and Discipline was solely in them ; nor did any Others, without Authority from them, undertake a judicial Execution of these Laws ; either to Admonish or Censure, to lose or bind, to admit into the Church or Exclude out of it. Which last (of Excluding or Excommunicating those who shall Despise the Laws of Christ and his Church) is the great Co-ercive Power which our Lord hath committed to his Vice-Gerents upon Earth ; with an expresse Promise, to confirm the Sentence in the next World upon such Obstinate Offenders, as will not before their Departure out of this Reconcile themselves to the Church.

In which Sense, we *Know* our Spiritual Governours, when in considering the Laws they make for the Government of the Church, with the Authority they Exercise to render them Effectual, we lay aside all Regards to *Human Policy* ; and look upon the *Laws*, as
made

made by Commission from Christ ; upon the *Bishops*, as entrusted with the Execution of them ; and upon *Christ*, as ready to confirm and ratify the Spiritual Censures they shall inflict in defence of his Laws and Authority.

In short therefore, to *Know* our Spiritual Governours, is, always to consider them as sent by Christ to be his Vice-Gerents in the Government of the Church, and in virtue of that Mission to be furnish'd with Spiritual Power for the effectual Discharge of their Office. In the Explication of both which, I have chosen to be thus Brief, considering that all here are Members of a Church which carefully instills these Doctrins into her Sons ; that as her Constitution is Episcopal, so an early Sense of its *Divine* Original may prepare them to *Reverence* and *Obe*y their Spiritual Fathers.

Which brings me to the Second General,

II. That the immediate effect of *Knowing* the Character and Authority of Bishops in the Church of Christ, is, a high *Esteem* and *Veneration* for them, *And to Esteem them very highly in Love*. Which Esteem consists, 1. In a Dutiful *Reverence* to their Persons ; and, 2. In a ready and conscientious *Obedience* to their Commands ; the first, immediately due to their *Divine Mission* and *Character* ; the second,

to that Authority by which Christ enables them to answer the *Ends* of their Mission.

1. The Divine Mission and Character of Bishops infers an Obligation upon the subordinate Members of the Church of Christ, to pay a dutiful Reverence to their Persons. They are *Ambassadors* sent to us from Christ, and upon that Account their Persons are Sacred, and every Violation thereof, whether in Word or Deed, is an Affront to the Master whose Character they bear. For when it pleases God, by a *Providential* Call, to single out particular Men to be Christ's Vice-Gerents upon Earth, Christians should need no other Notice where to place their Esteem and Reverence: It becomes them to submit their own private Thoughts and Judgment to the Wisdom of God, who has promis'd to support the Church, and knows best how to provide for the Necessities of it. And they who at any time shall reckon their Spiritual Governours *Inferior* to themselves as to human Accomplishments, may do well to remember, That as God by his Providence separates them for that high Office, so by his Holy Spirit he is able to supply them abundantly with Wisdom and Understanding, for the Discharge thereof in such a manner as shall be most for the Benefit of his Church.

But

But tho' the natural effect of these Considerations, be an awful Reverence and Veneration for the Persons thus honour'd by Divine Providence, there is yet more requir'd to make up the *Esteem* which my Text speaks of: It must be an Esteem mixt with *Love* and *Gratitude for their Works sake*; arising from a Sense of the Spiritual Benefits convey'd to us by their Hands and the Hands of those whom they send, in Blessings and Prayers, and a regular Administration of the Ordinances of the Gospel. We, more especially, who are honour'd with a part in the Sacred Ministry, and are Ambassadors immediately from Them as They are from Christ, ought to show the Value we set upon the Rich Portion we have obtain'd of God, by a pious and grateful Remembrance, through whose Hands it descended to Us. Add to these the outward Blessings of *Peace, Order and Unity* in the Church; which are secured to Christians in all Ages by the care and watchfulness of those who are chosen of Christ to be the Fathers and Masters of his Family upon Earth.

As therefore our *Spiritual Life* is at first convey'd to Us, and then fed and nourish'd, through their Power and Ministry for the Edification of the Church; in that Sense they

they are properly our *Spiritual Fathers* ; and this Relation calls for a *filial Duty* and Esteem on our part : The Obligation to which can no more be cancell'd, than a Son can be discharg'd from Duty and Reverence to his Father. And the true Reason why Men can hear the Reproaches of Christians against their *Spiritual Fathers*, with less abhorrence than those of Sons towards their Fathers of the Flesh, is the want of setting a just Esteem upon *Spiritual Benefits*, and considering the ordinary Methods by which they are dispens'd to the Church of Christ.

2. Another consequence of *Knowing* our *Spiritual Superiors*, is the paying a ready and conscientious Obedience to their Commands. For an Obligation to *Obey*, immediately flows from a Right to *Command* ; supposing the Superiors not to extend their Commands beyond the Terms of their Commission. And tho' all Government, whether Temporal or Spiritual, be from God the Author of Peace and Order in the World ; yet the *Obligations* to Obedience may be more strict and pressing, and the *Disobedience* more criminal in Degree, as the *Divinity* of the Power from whence the Command comes, is more clear and visible to Mankind. And no Authority administred
by

by Man, can be more evidently Divine, and by consequence more strictly Obligatory, than this of the Bishops in the Government of the Church. The *Government* it self is of a Spiritual Nature and for Ends purely Spiritual ; and Religion being so nearly concern'd in its very Institution, the Commands of it, which reach not the Body, must more *immediately* affect the Minds and Consciences of Men. The *Governours* are they who succeed Christ and his Apostles in the Administration of the Church, having receiv'd a solemn Delegation to the Office, with peculiar Gifts for the Discharge of it : And what can make any Command more Awful, than its coming from a Person who bears so direct a Relation to Christ himself ?

And agreeably to their divine *Mission*, the lawful Commands of our Spiritual Governours are bound upon Christians, under the Penalty of an immediate Despight done to God and Christ by any Contempt or Disobedience : *He that despiseth you, despiseth me, and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me.* Luke 10.
16. The Consideration, upon which we find Obedience to Bishops so frequently enforc'd by one of the most early Writers of the Church ; who in his Exhortations to that purpose, calls them the *Mouth*, the *Voice*, and Ignat.
Epist.
passim. the

the *Image* of God ; teaching the Christians ;
To be subject to their Bishop as to Jesus Christ ;
Not to resist him, if they would not resist God ;
 and, *That the Honour or Dishonour offer'd to their*
Bishops, passes on to Christ , and from Christ to
God.

Now, if *Private* Christians become thus
 Obnoxious to the Divine Displeasure by re-
 sisting or disobeying their Spiritual Superiors ;
 how much greater must the Offence be in Us,
 who having a clearer View of the Divine Ori-
 ginal of Church-Power, and being also more
 immediately concern'd for the Support of it,
 ought to make our Selves *Examples* of Obe-
 dience to all Others. When *We* disobey the
 lawful Commands of our Bishops, we despise
 the Power from which we receiv'd our own ;
 We contradict the End and Design of our
 Mission, which was to Minister in a due Sub-
 ordination to these our Superiors ; and we
 break thro' that solemn Engagement of Obe-
 dience into which we are known to Enter
 upon our Admission to the Ministry. Conse-
 quences, which ought mightily to Discourage
 us from any Act of Disobedience, where it
 is not very plain and clear that the *Matter* of
 the Command is unlawful, or the *Authority*
 deficient.

Thus

Thus much of the Obligation which all Christians are under, to *Reverence* and *Obey* their Spiritual Superiors ; as these two Acts of Esteem immediately flow from a right *Knowledge* of their Character and Authority. And because it is of the utmost Importance to the regular Discipline of the Church, that all Christians live in a *Religious Sense* of these Obligations ; I will proceed to such other Considerations as may convince us of the necessity of a strict *Observance* of these Duties, if we desire the Continuance of Order or Episcopacy among us. Which Considerations will make up the Proof of my Third General,

III. That the *Want* of this Esteem and Veneration upon the Minds of Christians, would disable our Superiors from answering the *Ends* of their Order, and in the Consequence endanger the *Order* it self.

For this is common to All Governments, That the Establishment and Administration are steady or unsteady, in proportion to the Opinion Men have conceiv'd of the *Wisdom*, *Goodness*, and *Abilities* of their Governours. And so at all times, as many as desire the *Continuance* of a Government, make it their great Business to *Raise* the Character and Reputation, and to Excuse the Miscarriages, of those in Authority : As, on the other hand, the

Men who are meditating new Schemes, always begin with Complaints against the Management, and Reflections upon the Wisdom or Integrity of the Prince. Nor do they fail, all the while, to Palliate their Designs against his *Person* by large Professions of Honour and Reverence to his *Authority*; knowing well, that there needs no more to make the Authority mean and useless, than the Diminution of the Person in whose Hands it is. We of this Nation know by woful Experience, how fast the Destruction of our Monarchy was carry'd on under a pernicious Distinction between the *Person* and *Authority* of the Prince; and if ever the same Distinction shall prevail in the Church, they who wish well to our Episcopal Government will have great reason to take the Alarm. For in all Cases, where Men's inward Meaning to a present Establishment is hearty, many *Private* Disgusts and Regretments are readily Sacrific'd to the *Publick* Safety. Or however, be Men's real Aim and Meaning what it will, the Diminution of the *Person* is a natural Step to the Destruction of the *Authority*; and when once such Storms are rais'd, they gather Strength apace; and they who shall blow them up to serve private Purposes, may desire to lay them again when it is too late.

Such

Such will always be the effect of vilifying the Persons, and censuring the Conduct of our Superiors, whether in *Church* or *State*. But in the Church, consider'd either in general, or with regard to this of our own Nation, such Liberties have a more pernicious Influence towards the weakning its Power and endangering the Constitution. For,

I. An Opinion of the Wisdom and Piety of the Governours of the Church, is almost the only way she has, to give her Censures and Admonitions their due effect for the Restraint and Reformation of Sinners. In the State, there is the *Civil Sword*, or a Right of inflicting temporal Punishments of all sorts, to secure Obedience to its Commands, and at least a decent Regard to its Authority : But the Church has no way to enforce Obedience to her Commands and Admonitions, besides the *Sword of the Spirit*, or the infliction of Spiritual Censures ; and (God knows) the *Divine Original and Authority* which ought to enforce them, is but little regarded in this Profane Age. How few are there, who consider our Bishops as Exercising their Power by an immediate Commission from Christ, or who have a just Sense of the Danger and Misery of being Excluded out of the Church, or indeed regard it on any other Account than as

it is attended with *Civil* Incapacities? And whenever *Property* comes to be concern'd, ways are usually found to deliver themselves from the Spiritual Power. However therefore the Authority be *Sacred* in it self, and the *Contempt* of it a high Provocation to Christ in whose stead they Act, yet these can be no *Principles* of Obedience, where they are not considered or regarded. Upon such Men, Ecclesiastical Censures have no real Efficacy, but what springs from a *Personal* Authority in our Superiors; and that must be grounded upon an establish'd Perswasion of their *Personal* Excellencies, *Piety, Wisdom, Justice, Integrity*, and the like. An Opinion of these in the Persons of our Governours, will never fail to command Reverence, and a due Regard to their Reproofs and Admonitions; no degrees of Wickedness being able to harden Men into a setl'd Contempt of Virtue and Religion. A remarkable Instance whereof we have in *John the Baptist*, of whom *St. Mark* says, That even *Herod* fear'd him, knowing that he was a just Man and a Holy, and observ'd him, and when he heard him, he did many Things, and heard him Gladly.

Mark,
6. 20.

To apply this to the Case before Us: It is evident in Fact, that Ecclesiastical Admonitions and Censures, entrusted with the Bishops

shops for the Government of the Church, lose much of their Efficacy upon the generality of Men, for want of a just regard to the *Divine Authority* from which they proceed. How therefore can we hope, that under this disadvantage the Governours of the Church should in any measure answer the *Ends* of their Office, or that the Government it self should long subsist, except the Friends of Ecclesiastical Discipline will use all just Methods of preserving upon the Minds of the People an *Esteem* and *Veneration* for them ; that so a Reverence to their Persons may in some degree repair the neglect and forgetfulness of their Divine Character.

2. A due Honour and Veneration for our Spiritual Fathers, is the more necessary to preserve the Discipline of the Church, considering how the very Execution of their Office draws upon them the Malice of irregular Men ; who are wont to inveigh liberally against the Hand that Corrects them. Even the *high Station* to which they are rais'd by the Divine Providence, is oft-times a Provocation to Ambitious Spirits to Envy and Resist them : As it was in the Rebellion of *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, who complain'd that *Moses* and *Aaron* took too much upon them, and would not allow any Right they had to
lift

Nums.
16. 31

lift up themselves above the Congregation of the Lord.

But the Oppositions to which the Fathers of the Church are most of all expos'd by the discharge of their Office, come from *disobedient, irregular and scandalous Livers*; those whom they have been oblig'd to Reprove and Admonish, and to execute upon them the Censures of the Church. This seldom fails to raise Resentments, which usually break forth in Calumny and Reproach: And the more the Conscientious discharge of their Function exposes them to the Calumnies of *wicked Men*, the more Right have they to be zealously defended by all *Sober and Orthodox Christians*. For what can we call the least Countenance given to the Slanders of such Men, but an endeavour to defeat the Ends of Ecclesiastical Discipline, and an Encouragement to Offenders to continue their irregular Courses in defiance of the Authority and Admonitions of the Church?

3. The want of a due Esteem and Veneration for our Spiritual Fathers, would give two Sorts of Adversaries a great advantage against our *Episcopal Church*.

The *Papists* (we know) have endeavour'd to Blemish the Reformation, by objecting against the *Lawfulness* of our Ministry; which

Ob-

Obje
Defe
stant
Men
ours
that
Chu
lum
testa
have
it a
Chu
the
tura
wil
shor
into
tha
hov
Per
Go
hav
Inft
the
tha
to
can
tha
Co

Objection they ground upon some pretended Defects in the Consecration of our first Protestant Bishops, and thereupon perswade the Members of their own Church, and those of ours whom they hope to make Profelytes, that our Bishops are meer Lay-men, and our Church therefore can be no Church. A Calumny which *Mason*, *Brambal*, and other Protestant Divines have abundantly shown to have no real Ground ; but yet we may give it a real Effect, by treating the Bishops of our Church like common Men, and denying them the Duty, Honour and Reverence which naturally belong to a Divine Character. This will put into the Hands of our Adversaries a short and easy Argument, fit to be insinuated into the Minds of unwary or illiterate Men, that we our selves show by our Behaviour, how little we are perswaded that these are Persons sent and appointed by Christ to be the Governours of his Church.

The *Presbyterians*, on another Hand, will have Episcopacy it self to be a mere *Human* Institution; alledging that the Government of the Church belongs to the Presbyters, and that the the Bishops have no Original Right to the Superiority they claim. And how can we more effectually confirm them in that Perswasion, than by Censuring the Conduct of our Bishops, and depressing their Cha-

Character and Authority, and treating them not like Superiors but Equals ? We may make what general Professions we please of Duty and Reverence to the Episcopal Character ; but they who shall thus treat their Persons and Authority , will find it hard to persuade the Adversaries of our Episcopal Church , that they are not effectually pleading the Cause of Presbytery.

4. The want of a due Esteem and Veneration for our Spiritual Superiors, has an immediate tendency to destroy the Peace, and even the Being of an Episcopal Church. For as the Bishop is the Center of Church-Unity, and a total Separation from him, an entire Breach of that Unity ; so every degree of Contempt, is a Step towards such a Separation. It is, in a natural Sense, a shaking of the Body ; which must unavoidably be weaken'd, when any one Member withdraws the Assistance which it ought to contribute to the support of the whole. And (to speak with regard to the *Body Politick*) one Member seldom falls off or separates, without corrupting many more : And as the Infection spreads, it raises a *War* in the Body ; the necessary effect whereof, is not only a Rebellion against the Head, but a difference among the

the Members, in Opinions, Interests, and Designs.

To this Purpose, St. Cyprian observ'd long ago, That the Contempt of Bishops, is the general Rise of *Schisms* and *Heresies* in the Church : *Inde enim Schismata & Hæreses obortæ sunt & oriuntur, dum Episcopus qui Unus est, & Ecclesiæ præest, superba quorundam præsumptione contemnitur ; & homo dignatione Dei honoratus, indignus ab hominibus judicatur.* And elsewhere, speaking of the same Thing, *Neque enim aliunde Hæreses obortæ sunt, aut nata sunt Schismata, quam inde quod Sacerdoti Dei non obtemperatur, nec unus in Ecclesia ad tempus Sacerdos & ad tempus judex vice Christi cogitatur :* And again, *Sic de Ecclesia receditur, sic Altare profanum foris collocatur, sic contra Pacem Christi & ordinationem atque unitatem Dei rebellatur.* Ep. 66. Ep. 50. Ep. 3.

But we need not go so far back, for a Testimony of the deplorable Consequences flowing from a *Contempt* and *Disesteem* of the Bishops of our Church : Our own Histories furnish us with an Instance, and that within the Memory of Man, not to be parallel'd by former Ages ; I mean the Miseries of this Church, and the utter extirpation of Episcopacy, during the late Civil Wars ; in the Springs whereof nothing is more clearly seen,
E than

than that the destruction of the Church was effected by a remarkable Diligence in the Chief Actors, to bring the *Persons, Order and Administration* of the Bishops into a general Disesteem and Contempt among the People.

The Great Clamours were (as I find them in the Histories, Speeches and Petitions of those Times) that they were a *Sett of proud and ambitious Men, who neglected the Good of Religion, and car'd for nothing but to Lord it over God's Heritage*: That they were the great Impediment to the perfect Reformation of Religion; That their Design was, to set up an Arbitrary Power over the Clergy, and to subject and inthrall the Ministers; That to serve this End, they unjustly exacted of them Canonical Obedience; That a greater Equality ought to be contriv'd in the Promotions of the Church; That therefore (in the Language of those Days) the Wings of the Prelats must be clip't; and the way propos'd to do it, was the bringing the Constitution of the Church to a greater Agreement with that in the State, and not to trust them any longer with the Government of the Church, but in all Actions of Moment to have some of the Ministry joyn'd with them.

By these and the like Clamours, a disesteem of their Persons, and a Jealousie of their Administration and Designs, were quickly infus'd into the Minds of the People; which prepar'd them to *applaud* the utter Abolition of the Order, as a necessary Step to Reformation; and that made way both for the Destruction of a Prince (the supporting of whose Authority, had been their only Crime) and for the entire overthrow of the wholsom Orders and Discipline of the Church.

Far be it from Us, to think that this Destruction of Episcopacy, and of the Establish'd Church, was originally in the Intention of all who at the first conniv'd at or encourag'd such Reproaches. On the contrary, Designs of State appear plainly enough to have been in the Eyes of several, who when they saw that it was not so much the Disgrace of the Persons, as the Destruction of the Church, that was really meant, began to retreat, and to lament the Part they had born in these Popular Measures; but it was then too late to retrieve the Mischief they had done. So easy a Step it is, from a contempt of the *Person*, to the Ruin of his *Authority*; and so dangerous for Men to presume upon a Power of setting

setting Bounds as they please, to the Jealousies they have once put into the Heads of a Multitude.

From such Practices, and the terrible Effects of them, may the God of Order and Unity ever more preserve this Church and Nation.



F I N I S.

alou-
of a

ffects
ever